

Service for Sunday 6 September Revd Pauline Crispin

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

You may find it strange that I have used the call to worship which we normally use at Easter. However, as Christians we celebrate every Sunday as a mini Easter. We recall the healing and renewing power of Christ and all that God has given to us. I am also using it for this first Sunday of the Connexional new year as that bring in many new beginnings and the fact that some of our churches are reopening at this time.

- 1 See, what a morning, gloriously bright,
with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem ;
folded the graveclothes, tomb filled with light,
as the angels announce Christ is risen !
See God's salvation plan,
wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,
fulfilled in Christ, the Man,
for he lives : Christ is risen from the dead !

- 2 See Mary weeping, 'Where is he laid ?'
as in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb ;
hears a voice speaking, calling her name ;
it's the Master, the Lord raised to life again !
The voice that spans the years,
speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us,
will sound till he appears,
for he lives : Christ is risen from the dead !

- 3 One with the Father, Ancient of Days,
through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty ;
honour and blessing, glory and praise
to the King crowned with power and authority !
And we are raised with him,
death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered ;
and we shall reign with him,
for he lives : Christ is risen from the dead !

Stuart Townend (*b.* 1963) and Keith Getty (*b.* 1974)

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John 21: 1-19

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Reflection

Many scholars believe that Chapter 21 is a later addition to John's Gospel, by another hand. It almost certainly reflects the concerns of the early Christian community, in this case Peter's position as the leader of the church. The risen Jesus' appearance to Peter and the disciples who were with him has significance for both Peter and the church. The theme of fishing as a metaphor for the missional task is not new, as many of us will record one of the first things Jesus said to the early disciples was 'I will make you fishers of men.'

The significance of the number of fish lies in its sheer quantity! Just as the disciples were fed by Jesus' teaching and by the food he offers, in other words by word and sacrament, so they are to feed others and the net of the church will hold all.

The imagery moves from that of fisher to shepherd as Peter, who denied Jesus three times, receives a threefold affirmation and commissioning. Peter was hurt by Jesus' need to press him the third time. Yet it is important to remember that the 'shepherd' was the 'leader' and to be a Christian leader inevitably involves hurt. All Christians are called to be 'shepherds' - to speak and act as representatives of Christ in their own time and place. Verses 18-19 refer to Peter's martyrdom, an event that had already taken place by the time of writing.

Leadership can be a lonely task! Sometimes ministers are weighed down by the high expectations of their congregations, while lay people, who seek to represent the Church in the wider world, often feel unsupported.

I invite you either now or when you have finished the service sheet to reread the passage from John's gospel. Then close your eyes and reimagine the story in your head, visualise the scene as if you are either in the boat with the disciple or watching the unfolding account

from the beach. You may place yourself eating with Jesus and the rest of the group and listening in on the conversation. What do you hear? what do you see? What do you taste and smell? Are you sharing in the breakfast? Or just sitting and watching?

You hear Jesus ask Peter *'do you love me?'* What are your thoughts, imagine what Peter's thoughts might be. You hear Jesus ask Peter a similar question twice more. How do you feel when you hear the same question repeated? Try to imagine what Peter might be thinking and feeling.

Then Jesus turns to you and asks you by name (put your own name here)...*'Do you love me?'* take as long as is needed to reply and try and listen to any reply from Christ. Then imagine He is asking you again, once again use your name.....reply and then listen for Christ's reply. The finish do it a third time repeating the process....what are you saying to or sharing with Christ and what is He saying back...

Spend as long as you need to in prayer or just in silence with the Lord.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Prayers for others

We stand in the presence of our maker,
knowing we have failed to be the people
our God wants us to be.

Let us face our faults and try to grow away from them,
through the love and mercy of God.

In our daily lives we have forgotten God,
we have put self-interest before care for others.
We have cared too much what others think of us and sought their good
opinion when we should have acted for Christ.
Teach us to love our neighbour as ourselves,
through the love and mercy of God.

We have set up idols in our lives, caring too much for things, for ways of life and for ideas.
We have lived our lives as if the world belonged to us.
We have forgotten who we are.
Teach us to remember we are all your children,
through the love and mercy of God.

We have set boundaries on your love,
choosing who we will include in your great family and who will be set outside it.

We have used your name to build barriers, to exclude and to imprison.
Teach us our right relationship with all of your creation,
through the love and mercy of God. Amen.

Lord, you have my heart,
and I will search for yours ;
Jesus, take my life and lead me on.

Lord, you have my heart,
and I will search for yours ;
let me be to you a sacrifice.

And I will praise you, Lord.
And I will sing of love come down.
And as you show your face,
we'll see your glory here.

Martin J. Smith

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**May Jesus bring abundance where there is scarcity,
confidence where there is fear,
purpose where there is staleness;
and may each of us know his forgiveness,
his love and his blessing,
in the days ahead and always. Amen.**

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love this day and forever more. Amen

